



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Chattanooga to Host COVID-Conscious Service Opportunities to Celebrate MLK Day in 2022

Due to Ongoing Pandemic, Dept. of Equity & Community Engagement to Host Donation Drive at City Hall; Encourages Small-Scale Neighborhood Volunteerism

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Dec. 27, 2021) — The City of Chattanooga's Department of Equity and Community Engagement will hold the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Monday, Jan. 17, in partnership with the University of Tennessee, River City Company, the NAACP, Scenic Cities Beautiful, the Bessie Smith Cultural Center, and the Unity Group of Chattanooga.

City Hall will serve as a collection point for donations to benefit organizations located in the ML King Boulevard and 11th Street area. Residents can either walk up or drive up to drop-off their donations from 8:30-11:30am on Jan. 17. Beneficiaries will be: Whiteside Faith Manor, Arts Build, The Community Kitchen, the Maclellan Shelter for Families, and Patten Towers residents. Likely items needed for donations include new or gently-used clothing, non-perishable food items, art supplies, and personal hygiene products such as toilet paper, paper towels, soap, and disposable masks. A full list of donations needed by receiving organizations will be provided closer to the event date.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the City will not host any larger-scale, in-person service projects for the MLK Day of Service in 2022. However the City encourages individuals, small groups and families to organize their own service projects within their neighborhoods, and share that activity online by using the hashtag #MLKChatt2022.

Honoring 2022's theme of *"The Beloved Community...It Starts With Me!"*, the City will host a short program to kick-off the donation drive, featuring welcome remarks from Mayor Tim Kelly, music by The Littleton Mason Singers, a spoken-word performance by Jayden Coleman, and reflections on service from the Mayor's Youth Council. The NAACP will also be in attendance to conduct voter registration and a membership drive.

The annual MLK Day of Service was launched in 2014 at the Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy as a "day on, not a day off," where Chattanooga residents were encouraged to come together and work on community-oriented service projects. Past projects have included a clean-up at the Historic Beck Knob Cemetery, painting and cleaning of local childcare centers, neighborhood beautification and litter pickups, and more.

The donation drive is a rain-or-shine event and will be live-streamed via the Department of Equity and Community Engagement's Facebook page.

Theme quote: *"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be."* —Dr. ML King, Jr.